

To the members of the Environmental Committee,

My name is George R. Baldwin, and I have been a Connecticut resident for 49 years. I am writing you to urge you to support the DEEP Kensington Hatchery and continue its funding. This facility is a valuable resource to our state's economy, sportsmen and educational institutions.

There are 65 schools, with 6,414 students, presently involved in the Salmon in the Classroom program. There are 86 schools, 103 tanks and an estimated 10,000 students involved and affected to some degree in the Trout In Classroom Schools, 103 tanks supported directly or indirectly by DEEP's Inland Fisheries Division.

Trout in the Classroom programs, with tanks in their schools containing fish that can only be supplied from the Kensington Hatchery. That hatchery alone has the water quality and disease-free Seeforellen brown trout stocks to supply these programs.

These fish provide an interesting and hands-on educational resource that engages students in their work and makes their learning real, relevant and meaningful. They are used to teach about genetics, aquaculture, growth and development, math skills, teamwork, problem-solving, data organization and many other aspects of a well-rounded education. All of these applications directly fit the STEM education model that is currently being encouraged in our Connecticut schools?

The Kensington Hatchery staff has been incredibly supportive of The Sound School, attended by my child, for many years. They've supported our programs, which annually use 200 Atlantic salmon eggs and about 10,000 Seeforellen brown trout eggs. We are just one of many schools benefitting from that facility.

Connecticut's economy and sportsmen also benefit from the hatchery and DEEP Inland Fisheries programs. It supplies resident and nonresident fishermen with countless hours of quality outdoor recreation and brings in money through fishing licenses, tackle sales, motel stays and restaurant meals. The savings from closing this facility would be superseded by the money from recreational fishing lost to our economy, and the quality of life in our state would be diminished for many. The hatchery's funding is supported, for a large part, by fishing licenses purchased for the purpose of using the products of this hatchery and cutting its funding would do very little to offset our current fiscal deficit.

Please take this into consideration when making your decision on this matter.

Respectfully,  
George R. Baldwin